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On this assumption we worked out the following periods of labour required in farming the winter crop, and this was generally accepted by the persons to whom we showed it.

Soil preparation and seed sowing: 10 days.
Collecting fertilizer: 2 months.
Distributing the fertilizer on the land: 3 days.
Irrigation (4 times, 2 days each time): 8 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

As the farmer usually goes to his farm at sunrise (though unpunctuality, due to laziness, is not infrequent, specially in the case of men) and returns at sunset, he then works an average of 10 hours a day, less the interruption of about two hours for the midday meal (sometimes taken in the field, other times at home). Thus the net amount of daily work can be estimated at 8 hours.

In this way the assumed productive unit works the following hours.

For the winter crop:
Soil preparation and sowing: 80 hours adult male; 80 hours 13-year-old.
Bringing fertilizer (a load a day, involving 4 hours' work for 2 months): 240 hours 13-year-old.
Distributing fertilizer on the land: 16 hours.
Mixed labour in irrigation involving the man and 2 boys: 64 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 720 hours or 3 months' work.

Here is computed the specific hours involved in distinctly farm activities to the exclusion of minor jobs, such as feeding the animals, bringing food home, etc., which we assume the boy of eight years old to undertake, and the time for which cannot be reasonably computed. The following summarizes the basic work required with respect to the summer crop.

Preparation and sowing: 7 days.
Gathering fertilizer: 3 months.
Distributing fertilizer (twice, 3 days each time): 6 days.
Irrigation (8 times, 2 days each time): 16 days.
Harvesting: 15 days.

The hours involved are as follows:
Soil preparation and sowing: 56 hours adult male; 56 hours 13-year-old.
Collecting fertilizer: 360 hours 13-year-old.
Distribution of fertilizer: 48 hours adult male.
Mixed labour in irrigation: 128 hours.
Harvesting: 120 hours adult male; 120 hours 13-year-old.
Total: 888 hours (approximately 4 months).

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LIVELIHOOD IN SILWA

[Boys] [GIRLS]

FROM SIXTEEN ONWARDS

885 [241] Beginning of responsibility with use of implements, e.g. plough, jarrafa, hoe, etc. . . .

[837] Responsibility in sowing, thinning out plants, and fertilizer distribution.

[285] Making 'maktafs', mats, panniers by plaiting palm leaves and sewing the plaits in the required shape.

All kinds of previously mentioned domestic work.

Complete seclusion, whether married or not.

883 A concrete example of a sixteen-year-old boy's day of work, who has no brothers, is given in the following account:

'I am overworked, because there are no other "hands" to help me and my father in working on our land. I spend practically no time at home during the day as I am busy now fetching the fertilizer and have to rise at the crack of dawn, when the "muazzin" calls "Prayers are better than sleep". My mother packs bread and dates, and sometimes eggs, in a handkerchief for my breakfast on the way to the hills. I am then ready with my camel, either to call on my neighbours or to be called on by them for the "fajriah" – the dawn load. On our way to the hills we partake of our breakfast and sing songs on camelback. On our arrival at a good spot we make our camels kneel, and load the panniers, filling the "maktaf" with clay first, lifting it on the knee and emptying it into the panniers. The test for a good 'nassag' is to be able to do the lifting and emptying in a steady way, maintaining a balance in the loads. Then we make our camels rise, and, following them, we go on to the fields. After the first load, we go back for a reload called "dihawiah"—the full beginning of the day (about ten o'clock). Meanwhile, my father prepares grass for the camel, or engages in irrigating the land. After the second load, I take my midday meal at home, and go for a third load of fertilizer, called "asriah" (about three o'clock in the afternoon). If I don't go for the afternoon load, I help my father in distributing fertilizer for some time, then I would take the camel home, laden with grass, at sunset, whereas my father follows me later with the cow.

'Of course my work becomes easier when the fertilizer-fetching season finishes. I then can enjoy my tea in the morning, go to the field at broad daybreak, and attend to the feeding of the cow and the camel, or irrigate the land. In the evenings I am not too tired to have a chat with my friends after the evening meal, or to pay visits to my relatives.'

[264] [492] [264] [269] [574]

594 It is quite obvious from the preceding discussion that the welfare of the family depends largely on the labour potential it has at its disposal, and the harmonious distribution of that labour. One of the main features in the economic activities in the village is that immediately the younger child develops to the stage where he can take over the tasks carried on by an

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difference between friends'. Moreover, economic pressure can be brought to produce social conformity and curb the heretic. In the case of a shopkeeper whose private life was open to suspicion, he found that his customers had gradually deserted him, and he had to search for work in town. Part of the village efforts to establish a new mill were provoked not only by the raising of the charges by the owners, but also by the fact that one of them had been accused of fomenting intrigues between the villagers. This added fuel to the mill's campaign 'to ruin the house of such a man'.

No study of the fellah's nutrition and its connection with cultural values has been made. The following remarks about diet in Silwa are appropriate; they are, however, inadequate as such a question requires a special enquiry by itself.

The villager has no concept of a balanced diet apart from a filling or a delicious meal. Meals, especially dinners, are often better provided after the reaping of the new harvest when food would be plentiful, and meat could be bought, while gradually the meals become poorer and meat is rarely served. It is said that 'one good meal a year is a support like a stick' in justifying one expensive meal whenever possible. Moreover, bread is always preferred to be hot, 'just coming from the oven', which means an arduous task to the housewives, as the provision of cooked food is an important part of their matrimonial duties. One of my female relatives told me that she knows of two cases where a husband had to divorce his wife because she seldom provided him with freshly-baked bread or hot 'ghamoos'—a cooked vegetable in which he can dip the bread.

The preparation and cooking of a meal is associated largely with certain kinship and neighbourly obligations. Relatives might help each other in picking the odd stones or foreign matter from the seeds before sending them to the mill, help in sieving the flour or in baking. If a woman bakes her bread in a hot oven of a neighbour (a device for saving fuel), she has to offer one of the children a loaf of bread. Neighbours and relatives might borrow loaves of bread from a woman who has just baked. After baking, a woman may send a loaf or loaves of bread to a widowed relative or send a 'dwaga'—bread to be tasted—from the newly-harvested crop.

As a rule, the villagers take three meals a day—breakfast (fatour), lunch (ghada), and an evening meal, at sunset (asha). But farmers occasionally eat between the meals anything available, which they call 'ijalla', i.e. the food that does not precipitate the next meal.

An evening meal, especially a well-prepared one, is certainly the apex of the day's work, the reward and joy [illegible] the day's efforts and toil.[1] The gathering round the table—'tablia'—[illegible] the evening meal, reflects the family unity, its hierarchy, and its discipline. The father and the children sit on the mat or on the bed round the low table to eat from one dish. If there is meat, it is the father who distributes it, giving each child his or her share, a larger portion to the older boys and less to the younger, and the

[1] For such feeling and attitude towards food, see R. Firth, *We, The Tikopia*, p. 33.

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girls, on the whole, getting less than the boys. Young girls may eat at their father's table, but after the age of twelve, sex dichotomy is established in food, and the female members of the family eat afterwards.

The meal usually starts with the invocation, 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful', and ends by every participant's saying 'Praise to God'. The father, as the disciplinarian, watches to see if any child shows signs of greed or wasting food by dropping it, whereupon he has to ask him to control himself, saying, 'Oh boy! Why don't you say in the name of God?' If the child continues to be careless or rude, he might be hit or given less share of the meat or his share might be given to one of his more disciplined brothers. Generally speaking, children are expected to be silent and obedient at meals. A child's complaint about food is not tolerated as such a complaint removes 'baraka'.

The end of more pretentious meals, especially on festival occasions, always witnesses the family's remembrance of its deceased members, when the father asks all the members present to recite the 'Fatiha' from the Koran for the souls of the dead. The eve of the two religious feasts Ramadan and Adha is called Rahamat—mercy, where practically every family prepares a good meal at the end of which they ask God to have mercy on their deceased. On the morning of the feast-days, the women-folk make special wheat bread, which they take to eat or distribute among children or whoever is present at the cemetery, asking them to read the Fatiha for their dead.

Hospitality is shown by offering an excessive amount of food. In case of guests, the table or tray is arranged with loaves of bread all round, no gaps being left. The guests should be made to feel that there is an abundance of food and 'ghamoos', and should be encouraged all the time to eat by saying, 'Go ahead; do your best; try more of this', and so on. The etiquette of hospitality is that while the guest must show a kind of restraint, the host must be always persuading him to carry on. The host must also apologize for not being able to provide the right quantity and quality of food for the occasion, saying, 'May our affection cover up the deficiency in the meal'.

There is no doubt that the partaking of food is one of the main forces bringing about or reinforcing relationship between members of this community and between them and other neighbouring villages. 'There is bread and salt between us' is a strong binding moral force between two people or two families, and to betray bread and salt is almost a sin, which is punishable either in this world or in the next. The commensalism of the clan-meals in the breaking of the daily fast during the whole month of Ramadan, breakfast on the mornings of the two feasts and on funeral days is a reminder of, and contributor to, group solidarity. Boys who carry their fathers' trays of food are usually exchanged, and sent to eat at another man's tray.

At the beginning of the fresh harvest, a special meal is provided by

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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neighbours in the field, where a small lamb or goat is killed in the field and cooked, on this occasion, by the men, while the women send the children with bread to the farm for the meal. It must be noticed that on this occasion, as well as at most communal meals, meat is served in one dish and is divided by one member or two amongst the participants. Such a meal will be followed by somebody standing up to invoke God's blessing —'baraka'—in the new harvest, as well as mercy on the deceased ancestors. Indeed Robertson Smith's remark is applicable to this community. 'The act of eating and drinking together is the solemn and stated expression of the fact that all who share the meal are brethren and that the duties of friendship and brotherhood are implicitly acknowledged in their common act.'[1]

To sum up, the village is a community of small landowners, who, irrespective of the size of their holdings, consider their land to be the basis of their livelihood and security and to be a possession for which they have great emotional attachment. There is no appreciable functional differentiation in occupations; hence, the amount of skill and knowledge required for livelihood is almost identical. In spite of a great deal of economic self-sufficiency in the peasant or rural community, and of reliance on subsistence crops, the inhabitants are still dependent on outside forces for the price of their crops and for the sale of manufactured goods and textiles. Moreover, with a population pressure, more and more of the village members have reluctantly left to seek livelihood in towns and cities and to take up work as caretakers and domestic servants. On their return to the village, such groups of people bring with them some of the town atmosphere, considering themselves 'masrawia' (been to the city). They sometimes consider themselves more refined, and are usually elegantly dressed, even adopting a different accent. Such mobility is definitely beginning to challenge in some measure the traditional stability and conventional behaviour.

In spite of the increasingly impinging forces of city life and the admiration of the villagers for city ways, the small landowners still uphold and maintain the vested common interest in favour of the traditional ways of life, symbolized in the dignity of farm-work compared to other occupations, in the importance of family unity and honour of ancestry, in the religious ethic based on contentment and abhorrence of pleasure-seeking, and in social sensitivity to shame-provoking situations.

Furthermore, the feeling of equalitarianism is so striking in this community that any schematic class-division is very difficult to apply to its social structure. Here again, irrespective of their landholdings, they all eat from their hand produce consisting mainly of bread and the same varieties of home-grown vegetables; they live in similar dwellings, built of stone, dried mud and palm trunks, constructed by the village masons

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, London, 1894, p. 263.

1: Ammar E. 1-5 (1951) 1954
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834 tions, and an old woman can pass by a group of men without covering her face, and can salute them, or talk to them on passing, but even then she cannot sit with men outside the house.

INTER-FAMILY RELATIONS

593 It is appropriate here to discuss the stylized norms of relationship and behaviour that should obtain between the various members of the family as an index to the understanding of the social structure and its functioning.

The husband-wife pattern is one where the husband is the superior partner and enjoys the highest position in the family. He is, as the saying goes, 'the supporting pillar and the vantage of the house', who is expected to make all the important decisions. The wife should tell her husband of the major events in the household, though he should not by convention betray any eagerness in enquiring about them. The husband is socially responsible for the acts and undertakings of his wife, immediately she moves from her matrilocal residence. He usually plans the work of his sons, while the wife does the same with the daughters; but he is not expected to interfere with his wife's domestic work. On the other hand, the wife is supposed to be submissive, devoted, and respectful to her husband. Sexual fidelity is the hallmark of sustained marriage relationship, as infidelity entails at least divorce, if not attempting to kill the wife and the paramour. As a wife, she should also attend to her husband, offering the best food to him rather than to the children or herself; the reason being that she can always have children but she cannot afford to have a substitute for her supporter (sanad). She should open the door for her husband when he knocks, pour out the water when he washes his hands after the meal, and give him priority in every respect.

Although the wife seems subordinate in this pattern of relationship, she is almost the absolute manager of the house. She is the treasurer of the crops, money, legal documents, and the holder of the keys to the various chests in the house. If the man is expected to be generous and showy, the wife is expected to be frugal and industrious. The saying is that 'the man is like an overflowing sea, while the woman is like a dyke, checking his undue extravagance'. It is also conceded that the building up of a man is due to his wife, but so is his downfall, which would be regarded as the result of his wife's domestic policy.

In spite of the fact that married women do not work in the field in Silwa and in most parts of Aswan Province, the wife certainly monopolizes certain economic pursuits which are considered to be purely her domain. She raises chickens, geese, ducks, goats and sheep, and men recognize this as a purely female occupation. This is in contrast to the raising of cows, camels and donkeys by men. My informant, Mahmoud, told me: 'Women look after the "small change" while men look after the pounds.' The wife raises poultry and tends to small change as these are directly concerned

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
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THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS AND EVENTS OF CHILDHOOD

862 It was mentioned earlier that food is considered almost sacred and it
269 was shown how this attitude towards it was instilled into the children. They call bread 'baraka' and swear by it.[1] Moreover, it is worth noting that while the children talk of, and display food freely, and have no shame about eating anywhere, adults are quite secretive and scrupulous about their food. The latter are wary of being exposed to the eye of a stranger while they are eating; they feel that if they do not ask the stranger to join them in the meal, he might have a bad effect on what they are eating. It is the custom to insist on any unexpected person joining them in eating even for one bite by saying, 'Come and say "In the Name of God".' The invited person in this case usually expresses his willingness to have a bite with the others to still any fear or suspicion, or says that he has just eaten, 'Thanks to God'. Food carried from the house to the guest house is usually covered, not necessarily for hygienic purposes, but for the fear of being 'breathed in' by onlookers. This secretive attitude towards food is usually inculcated into the children when they are old enough to be able to know when to stop eating or postpone it, if a visitor suddenly comes to the house. It is not surprising to find food as one of the major interests in children's lives in a community which divides the year into the seasons of richness
[805] and plenty, referring to the times immediately after the harvest, while those times preceding it are called seasons of hunger.

852 The greatest experience that the child undergoes during childhood is
304 circumcision. The boy is usually circumcised between the ages of three and six, and his circumcision is accompanied by a ceremony which is justified on religious grounds. The adult public celebration of the occasion consists of communal feasting of all the male relatives and friends invited on the evening previous to the evening of the rite, while the female relatives partake of a meal in the house. In the case of a girl's circumcision, the celebration is confined purely to women, and no man, not even the father, is expected to participate, or to show an interest in it.

Before the actual celebrations of the ceremony, the boy who is to be circumcised is taken round the village with a group of his age-mates and older boys, inviting relatives and friends in their houses to join the celebration of the occasion. Sometimes the invitation is oral, and sometimes by handing over a written invitation.

The day of circumcision arrives, and as expected during the evening
[264] communal meal, boys would be eating from separate trays apart from the adults, while some of them would be serving the rest of the guests by fetching more bread, or more vegetables, and washing hands before and after the meal, while an adult would be chosen to distribute the meat from a common dish. The meal would end with the reading of 'Fatiha' to render the event successful, and expressed hope that the guests might one day attend the child's marriage ceremony, and blessings invoked for the parents and the family. The meal would be followed by reciting parts from the

[1] See Chapter I.

1: Ammar E, 1-5 (1951) 1954
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the Koran at least, and the passing of an entrance examination in Arabic, arithmetic and drawing.

Yet compulsory education in Silwa, and probably in the rest of the country, has not been fully accepted by the rural people, and on the whole has been a failure, both quantitatively and qualitatively. I have not met any one of the villagers in Silwa who was enthusiastic about the educational role of the compulsory school. Although the compulsory school teaches parts of the Koran and includes religious instruction in its curriculum, the villagers do not think that it has the proper religious atmosphere which the Kuttab on the other hand provides. In spite of the fact that the teachers themselves are respected by the villagers, the latter quite often refer to the school as 'that place where they teach "wazan" ', the first word in the reader. In the emotional overtone of ridicule implied in the word 'wazan' the villagers themselves have diagnosed the main weakness of the compulsory school which confines itself to the teaching of the three R's—religious instruction, drawing and poems and songs in the classical Arabic (nasheed). Even for the children themselves, the compulsory school seems somewhat exotic, being the place where they learn drawing and singing. On the whole, the acceptance of school as a contributor to the village life has been vitiated by limiting its scope to abolishing illiteracy, and by the irrelevance of its aims and methods to the actual life of the villagers.

It is not surprising, then, that the villagers consider the sending of their children to the elementary school as a waste of time, and try by every means to evade attendance. I have seen quite a few names on the list of those eligible for compulsory schooling after which the village Omda or Sheikhs have signed a declaration that a particular child has left the village for an unknown place. The problem of regular attendance is, of course, a baffling one, both for the teaching staff who keep notifying the parents, as well as the police courts.[1] The dilemma of the two teachers from the village is most acute since they usually find themselves torn between their official duty and their obligations in handling cases of absenteeism from the school. This, in fact, creates a lot of friction between the school teachers and the villagers. Parents come to the school trying to make excuses for their children's absence, or to withdraw them from it for the rest of the day for a pressing task as if the children were in the Kuttab. It is interesting to note here that according to the school records the attendance has certainly improved in the village school since the provision of a midday meal for the school children, a scheme which started in 1942 and was in operation in Silwa in 1947. At present, it is applied throughout all the compulsory schools in the country.[2]

[1] The statistics of the Elementary Education Department show that in 1939–40 the average attendance in compulsory schools in the whole country was about 60 per cent of the total registered numbers (Al-Kabbani, op. cit., p. 33). In the village, absence from school, or from the Kuttab, is extremely high during weeks of irrigation and time of harvest when there is much work to be done in the fields.

[2] The following is a list of the items of food provided to a child per week:

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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threshing-floor, either *faṭīr*, *kunāfeh*, or *rashteh*, or cooked meat. He stands up on one of the heaps of grain and calls out to his

FIG. 102. CARRYING CORN TO THE THRESHING-FLOOR

friends, " Come and eat," and he fires off his gun as a sign of joy. When his friends have eaten he places some of the food that is over

FIG. 103. THRESHING WITH THE NŌRAG

around and in the heaps of grain. This, it is believed, will bring a blessing and a plentiful supply of the grain; also, so the peasants

sightseers. The floor and the walls of the room were of mud, but a fairly clean mat was secured for me to sit on, the magician and her patient squatting close by me. The former took the kerchief from off her patient's head, folded it cornerwise, and measured it from corner to corner with the span of her hand. She then knotted it and sat on it. Suddenly her whole body began to shake violently, and she uttered curious noises. This indicated that the sheikh was assisting her and making his presence felt. Her face now underwent a remarkable change of expression, and her voice, attitude, and whole behaviour became distinctly masculine, and everybody present addressed her as the Sheikh Muḥammed. She told her patient that she was to visit a certain sheikh's well, which was situated some miles away from her village. The sick woman asked if she might not go to the well of a sheikh in the magician's own village, but this request was peremptorily refused. It was, she said, necessary that the well mentioned before should be visited. This event happened during Ramaḍān, the month of the Muslim fast, and the magician told the woman that she was to come to see her again on the day of the 'Little Festival' (which immediately follows Ramaḍān) and that then she would give her a charm to wear.

The magician kept up her manly impersonation even after the *séance* was over, and she presently declared, much to the joy and amusement of the villagers, that she had fallen in love with me and wished to marry me! This ridiculous speech was believed to come from the Sheikh Muḥammed who possessed her and whom she impersonated, at any rate for the time being. She would not be satisfied until I consented to be photographed with her!

Another female magician of my acquaintance (Fig. 114) is also somewhat renowned within her village circle. This woman's husband is dead, and she lives with two of her sons. One room in their house is set aside for her use only; no one else must ever enter it, except the people from beneath the earth, with whom she is supposed to be in close and intimate relationship, and for whom there is always a supply of food and a *ḳulleh* full of water in her room. When she takes a meal she does so in this apartment, and she will not eat with other people. She has five familiars who live beneath the earth, and through them she gets into touch with the other subterranean supernatural beings, including *'afārīt*. One of these familiars is called Zedimāl; another, a son of Zedimāl, is called

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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ʿAFĀRĪT

The *ʿafārīt* are, as I have said, supposed to be made of fire, so they are naturally found in their native element. Therefore, before extinguishing, or casting anything into, a fire it is usual to say "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," thus giving the *ʿafrīt* who may be in the fire time to withdraw. Also, before pouring water or other liquid on to the ground many people say "*Dastūr*" ("Permission") or "*Dastūr yā mubārakīn*" ("Permission, O blessed ones"), in case there may be *ʿafārīt* near by. For should there be *ʿafārīt* in the fire at the moment that it was put out, or should the water touch them when poured on to the ground, they would take revenge on the person who had not duly warned them of what he or she was going to do.

FIG. 135. A MAGICIAN OF MY ACQUAINTANCE

Before beginning to eat, and also before removing any food from the room in which the household stores are kept, both Muslims and Copts will say "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." This, I am told, is to prevent the *ʿafārīt* from taking any of the food. Copts will sometimes say "In the name of the Cross," and will make the sign of the Cross over the food, for the same purpose. Again, a woman will make use of one of these two phrases before beginning to mix the flour for making bread.

A magician is supposed to be able to control *ʿafārīt* and to make them appear before him. He can also issue orders to their king, which the latter has to obey. The magician calls up the *ʿafārīt* from below the earth by reciting incantations, burning incense the while, and sometimes pouring out a libation of water (see p. 193).

People who are afflicted by *ʿafārīt* regularly apply for assistance to magicians, who are often men of benevolent character, and who,

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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964 The mother of this Sheikh, who was very devoted to her son, did not survive him for many years. I was present at her funeral, which was attended by a large crowd of friends and relatives. She was buried in a grave near the tomb of her saintly son.

792 158 The sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf lived in a small village in Middle Egypt, where some of his family still reside. An old man, the son of the sheikh's paternal uncle, is well known to me.[1] The sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf was, in his lifetime, looked upon as a *walī*.[2] Insanity is the usual qualification for this high standing among the Muslim saints of Egypt, persons thus afflicted being regarded as the favourites of God. The sheikh had a habit of entering the houses of the people at night, after the doors had been locked, and while the evening meal was being cooked; for locked doors formed no barriers to the egress or ingress of this holy man. On entering [264] he would immediately eat up all the food; meat, bread, and vegetables, no matter how large the quantity, would all be devoured on the spot. Any glass bottles that happened to be lying about might be included in this repast, for these he would bite up and [152] swallow without drawing any blood. There was only one thing he feared, and that was water. If anyone threw a few drops of water at him he would run away in terror, as fast as his legs could carry him. My informant remembered him well, and he told me that on one occasion the sheikh entered his house after the entrance door had been securely locked and ate up all the food, including soup prepared for the evening meal.

792 766 778 [969] When the sheikh died hundreds of people attended his funeral, and, being a very good man, he made his bearers walk quickly to the grave.[3] Above it has been erected the usual domed tomb; it is situated near that of the venerated sheikh Umbārak (Fig. 140) for whom a *mūlid*, or festival, is held once every year.[4]

769 688 One year, on the occasion of this festival, a man climbed on to the outside of the tomb of the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf without first removing his shoes. Some of the people standing round remonstrated with him for this act of irreverence, but he replied, "Who is the sheikh ʿAbdu ʾl-Laṭīf? He is nobody!" and refused to climb down or to take off his shoes. However, when he wanted

[1] At the moment of writing this I received a letter from Egypt telling me of this old man's death. He is the same man who divorced his wife by the triple [586] divorce, described in Chapter V, pp. 95 f.

[2] *Walī* means 'friend' (*i.e.*, of God), and a Muslim saint is commonly so designated.

[3] See Chapter VII, p. 113.

[4] See Chapter XVI, pp. 252 ff.

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

in an inscription of Ramesses III at Medīnet Habu,[1] and the Egyptian peasants seem to have been wearing a garment very like the latter, only sleeveless, by the early Ptolemaic period, judging from the reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris at Derweh;[2] but the *gallabīyeh* may date back even to the Sixth Dynasty.[3] It should be observed that women wearing veils on their heads like those worn by the modern peasant women in many parts of Egypt occur several times in those reliefs in the tomb of Petosiris that are executed in Greek style.[4]

It might here be mentioned that blue was the colour for mourning in ancient Egypt,[5] and that dark blue as well as black is still the mourning colour in modern Egypt (see pp. 50, 111, 264, 295).

I have not, as I should, referred in the previous chapters to the custom of washing before and after a meal and before private and public prayers. This is a very old custom and is often referred to in the ancient Egyptian literary and religious texts.[6]

It was evidently considered as important to have a large family in ancient as it is in modern Egypt (see p. 97). The sage Anii advises his son to "take a wife when thou art a youth, that she may give thee a son. Thou shouldst beget him for thee whilst thou art yet young, and shouldst live to see him become a man [?]. Happy is the man who hath much people, and he is respected because of his children."[7]

Several of the ceremonies connected with birth can be shown to be of ancient origin. Apart from the reference in the Old Testament,[8] the existence of professional midwives in ancient Egypt is suggested by the account of the birth of the divinely begotten triplets of Red-djedet in the tales of *King Kheops and the Magicians*, which dates from the time of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1788 B.C.).[9] In earliest times the Egyptian women squatted to

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Records*, vol. iv (Chicago, 1906), § 47.
[2] M. G. Lefebvre, *Tombeau de Petosiris*, vol. iii (Cairo, 1924), Pls. XII–XV.
[3] See W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), pp. 31 f.
[4] M. G. Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, Pls. XIX, XX, XLVI.
[5] A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*, vol. xlvii, pp. 162 f.
[6] For a number of interesting references see A. M. Blackman, "Purification (Egyptian)," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. x, pp. 477, 480 f., *Luxor and its Temples*, p. 7, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. v, pp. 153, 154 and note 5.
[7] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
[8] Exodus i, 16.
[9] A. Erman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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AGRICULTURE AND HARVEST RITES

In some parts of Upper Egypt the following customs are observed in connexion with the cultivation of *dura* (maize) only. A *dura*-field is irrigated by means of a water-wheel or a *shādūf* ten times, and when the water has been conveyed to the fields for the last time the owner, or one of his family, brings to the field *faṭīr* (a kind of sweet pastry), or *kunāfeh* (fine macaroni), or *rashteh* (macaroni cooked in milk). He then stands on one of the pillars of the water-wheel or *shādūf* and cries to his neighbours in the field, "Come and eat," firing his gun at the same time. Such firing takes place regularly at weddings, or on any joyous occasion. After the food has been eaten the owner of the field plucks some of the heads of the *dura*-plants and places them on one of the empty food plates. This he presents to whichever member of his family brought the food. He then returns to the field and plucks four heads of *dura*, which are fastened on the foreheads of the two oxen or buffaloes which worked the water-wheel. The animals are then driven home, and all who see them will know by the heads of *dura* decorating their foreheads that the irrigation of their owner's field of *dura* is finished.

FIG. 101. A SICKLE

When a *shādūf* is used for raising the water the owner plucks a head of *dura* for each *shādūf* that has been used for irrigating his field. The *dura* is attached to the arms (or levers) of the *shawādīf* which, like the cattle, are brought home thus decorated with the maize.

The last time of irrigating a field of *dura* is called *el-fiṭāmeh*, which means the act of weaning. The same name is given to the last occasion on which a mother suckles her child.

In many of the provinces of Upper Egypt, when the *dura* or wheat or barley has been threshed the heaps of grain are left standing on the threshing-floor all night. But before sunset, when the work is completed, the owner of the grain brings some food to the

Paradoxical as it may seem, there appears to be a relation between the increase in this "drug habit" and the development of perennial irrigation. It has in fact been proved that this invention, which has doubled Egypt's wealth, has also encouraged bilharzia and ankylostomiasis. These diseases weaken the fellah and reduce his power to work. He seeks relief in the stimulant readiest to hand. As the men, who spend their lives in mud and water, are more affected by these diseases than the women, they are also more addicted to this "black tea" (44).

The cultivation of tobacco, which was brought into Egypt at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was forbidden by a decree of 25th June, 1890. Imported in the raw state from Greece, Turkey and Japan, and processed in Egypt, it is too dear for most of the fellaheen. As with coffee, it is in much greater use in the towns (47).

As a rule the fellaheen eat three meals a day ; at sunrise before leaving for work (*futûr*) ; about 10 o'clock, in the field (*ghâda*) ; and at home at dusk (*'asha*). The fellaheen always sit cross-legged on the ground, and eat with their fingers.

Those at work usually eat their lunch (*ghâda*) in the open air and in company, each taking his food from the plate or enamel pot his wife has brought him, while the water bottle passes from hand to hand.

The chief meal is supper, which consists of warm cooked food eaten with the family. Cooking is done with oil over a Primus stove, or in a household oven fed with strawed cow-dung (*gilla*).

The fellaheen do not go in for cattle-rearing, and as meat is expensive they cannot eat much of it. They have mutton or beef at most once a week, and at least on the two great festivals, or when an animal is killed by accident. This means an orgy, at which everyone puts away tremendous helpings of food. Every now and again some rich man, for a vow or a funeral, kills an ox or *gamoossa* and gives away its meat ; then the poorest can have a feast for nothing.

Those who live on the banks of the Nile, a large canal, or a lake, use nets to catch small fish, which they cook in oil. But most of them are limited to vegetables. Onions (*bassal*), turnips (*lift*), green peppers (*filfil*) and cucumbers (*khiyâr*) are eaten raw. Vegetables which they cook are ladies' fingers (*bâmia*) and *molokhiya* (Jew's mallow) (48), both of

which the fellaheen enjoy immensely. Beans (*fûl*) are the national dish. Then there are little marrows (*kûsa*), and finally lentils and rice, which are often mixed, one part to two, to make *kushri*. This is their most effective concoction.

For dessert, when they have the opportunity, they eat dates, or bite huge mouthfuls out of slices of water-melon. They may also chew sugar cane, or gnaw maize roasted on the cob.

Place and season afford a certain variety, but there is no wide choice at any one time. The common meal always consists of one dish, to which is often added a piece of *mish*, a coarse, sour kind of cream cheese, made of goat's or *gamoossa's* milk preserved in salt water, which is eaten from one end of Egypt to the other.

For flavouring the fellaheen use crude salt from Damietta, and a kind of treacle made by boiling sugar-cane juice. They rarely put manufactured salt or sugar in their ordinary food. On the occasion of a wedding, circumcision, or *mûlid*, they buy plain cakes and red or green sweets, which they find as toothsome as their children do.

The staple food of the fellah is his maize bread (*bettai*). This provides 80% of the calories in his diet, and half the proteins. A grown man will eat three pounds of it a day. It has been calculated that this wholemeal bread contains six times more magnesium than normal baker's bread(1).

The grains of maize are not pounded in a mortar, as millet is by the black peoples of Africa, but ground between two millstones, after the manner used throughout the Near East.

This primitive mill, found also in Morocco, consists of two large flat stone wheels about two feet wide and three inches thick. The one on the ground is fixed, while the upper one turns on a pivot. It is pierced with a central eyelet, into which the grain to be ground is poured. A wooden pin set upright in a hole near the edge of the moveable wheel serves as a turning handle. This grinding, like the other processes of breadmaking, is done by the womenfolk.

The flour, with the addition of a little fenugreek (*helba*), millet, corn or beans, is kneaded on a piece of wood into round, flat cakes, about ten inches across. This dough, cooked in the household oven, produces a golden brown bread with a very pleasant taste, made of two soft crusts

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CHAPTER III.

WORKING DAYS AND HOLIDAYS, DAYS OF JUBILEE AND DAYS OF MOURNING.

WORKING-DAY LIFE OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

In Upper Egypt the life of the ordinary inhabitant of the towns is passed in a simple and uniform manner. Before sunrise he leaves his couch, performs the morning ablutions enjoined by his religion, and repeats his early prayer. To say his morning prayer after sunrise is forbidden by the ordinances of his religion, and to allow the sun to rise above one's slumbering head is universally regarded as prejudicial to health. He then drinks his cup of coffee and smokes his pipe, either at home or in the public coffee-house. His breakfast, which he takes after his coffee (though sometimes before it), consists of the remains of his meal of the previous evening, or of cakes and milk, or for a trifle he procures from the market the ever ready national dish of *ful*, that is, stewed beans. He then engages in his vocations, buys, sells, writes, works, or moves about, all in the most comfortable, quiet, and deliberate manner. "What is not done to-day may be to-morrow"—in good Arabic, *bokra in shah Allah* (to-morrow if God please)—stands written on his forehead in large letters. The most urgent affairs leave always a quarter of an hour free in which to gossip with acquaintances over coffee and a pipe, be it in retail-shop, workshop, or office. And if many acquaintances turn up the more numerous grow these quarters-of-an-hour. Now and again he has no work, or no desire to do it, and then he drags himself from one friend to the other. Bread for himself and his family will no doubt turn up; *robinna kerim*—"the Lord is gracious (or liberal);" it is but little he requires, and in case of necessity his soft-hearted neighbour will not allow him to go supperless to bed. Even before the mid-day call of the muezzin from the minaret, he

[p. 158]

[pp. 1-157 not processed]

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has made his preparations for the hour of prayer, and after the performance of his devotions he returns home and enjoys his simple dinner. This consists for the most part only of bread with fruits or with white country cheese, milk, salt fish, or molasses (the so-called black honey).

He takes care not to make his mid-day sleep too short, especially in the long warm days of summer, and he lies down in his house or in his shop, in the café, or in any shady spot in the open air; at this time the streets and markets become deserted. Not till well through the afternoon does he again move, when he begins the second portion of the day as he did the first, with ablutions, prayers, and coffee, afterwards bestirring himself with some energy to make up during the remainder of the day for the time he has dreamed and trifled away. For this remainder is but short, and with the last rays of the setting sun the call from the minaret is again heard, the trader shuts his shop, the workman flings by his tool, the scholar, the writer, and the man of learning shut their books. This dawdling habit, which, in the province, at least, is the rule, is not, however, solely the result of indolence, but arises more from the fact that little trade or industry exists, and the want of a regular weekly day of rest is also not without blame. The natives when necessary often display the greatest ardour and even steady perseverance.

The cultivation of the fields allows the countryman less leisure for the *dolce far niente*, but even he does not overwork himself. From the mellowness and fertility of the soil his labour is light enough when compared with that of a northern peasant, and chiefly consists in the artificial watering of the land, effected mostly by the labour of young people or of cattle. When he can the countryman also takes his hours of idleness, and sleeps, and gossips, and sings. He too is never in a hurry. This slowness of action, intimately connected as it is with fatalism, is as intolerable to a European who is in haste, as it is beneficial to one who wishes to rest a little from the hurry and scurry of the West.

After his evening devotions the dweller in the town moves

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After his
512 evening devotions the dweller in the town moves
homeward to his house, where his supper is already awaiting
him. At this meal, which is generally the principal meal of
the day, he quite acts the gourmand. His wife brings it to
[915] him on a round wooden board elevated on pieces of wood or
short feet (*tablieh*); among richer people a shield-like metal
plate (*sanieh*) is used instead. The basis of the meal is bread
made of wheat or millet flour, or hot unleavened cakes—of
[252] which he devours incredible quantities—baked over a fire of
dung. His wife has also boiled or fried for him a fish with
onions and oil, or there lies in the pot a young pigeon or a
fowl, the juice of which tastes excellently when the cakes are
dipped in it. Sometimes also a small piece of mutton, buffalo,
camel, or goat flesh has been procured, with which the
soaked *bamieyhs* or the viscous-juiced, spinach-like *moluchieh*
are cooked. These, however, are the more expensive viands,
and in the evening also people on ordinary occasions are
satisfied with the *ful*, which has become so much a national
dish, and which (beans in general), according to Herodotus,
was forbidden to the ancient Egyptians, or at least to the
priests, and hence also to the Pythagoreans. Other dishes
are such as lentils boiled in water without flesh, ful with
moluchieh, a thick flour paste, coarsely ground barley or
wheat, a cake made with butter, an omelet, fruit, roasted
grain, salt, and caraway, and especially raw onions. All
these except ful were also eaten by the ancient Egyptians,
[104] with the addition of papyrus and lotus. The consumption
of lentils was so general that Strabo believed that the num-
mulites of the mountains were the fossilized remains of the
lentils used by the labourers. Whenever it is possible two
or three kinds of dishes must be on the table, and the inha-
bitant of the town tastes of them indiscriminately, taking
a piece now from this, now from that.

512 After the evening meal our citizen either remains at home
enjoying a dignified ease in his harem, or he takes up his
position before his house, stretched out in the dust of the
street, or squatting amidst a knot of peaceful neighbours; less
frequently he visits the café again, or calls on a friend in his
[504] house or court-yard if he has a friend able and ready to

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a shallow tub, and by pouring warm water over the body and scrubbing it with soap and date bast. In the public baths certain hours or days are set apart for the fair sex, and here many women spend half days bathing, adorning themselves, smoking, and gossiping. At these times no male, not even a eunuch would dare to set foot in the apartments.

In other respects also the women are by no means robbed of social pleasures. They visit each other often enough, if possible early in the morning, and are wont to remain half a day, a whole day, or even several days, though both parties may be in the same town. They smoke, drink coffee (the latter being less in use among the women than among the men—the opposite to what holds good among the Franks), gossip, show their ornaments and finery, tell stories and wonderful tales, sew, embroider (but do not knit), sing and dance, or better, make some one sing and dance before them (since a well-conducted lady ought neither to be seen nor heard, and therefore should not sing), laugh and make merry—in short the harem so greatly pitied elsewhere enjoy life, but on the sole condition, that no man be present! They are less often allowed to take a walk in the open air; some—and this is considered a great virtue—never leave the house after their marriage. Their lady friends come to visit them instead, and as almost every house in these regions has its court-yard or a terrace, women are by no means kept out of the open air. Moslim women are generally excused from the burdensome prayers of the men, and pious or even hypocritical women are in the Moslim female world a great rarity; indeed they scarcely know the most important doctrines of their religion. Piety in them is even looked upon with dislike.

At mid-day the husband always eats alone, or with his boys or guests. Immediately afterwards, however, the wife again comes into honour since her lord likes to enjoy his siesta in the chambers of the harem. After sunset no respectable woman must show herself outside the house, even though veiled and attended, and now, or some hours later, the husband

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562 again repairs to the sacred apartments of those denied to all
[512] but himself.

In the feeling of the Moslim the harems are not citadels of jealousy, in which the husband keeps penned up a considerable flock of luxurious indolent beauties. This representation, so current in the land of the Franks, is spurned by the Oriental with indignation. The women's apartments are
[834] rather places sacred and inviolable, where the *harim* (singular *hurme; hárem* is meaningless), that is "the prohibited," the women, the *family*, and therefore the husband's dearest treasure must be guarded from profane glances and frivolous influences. As above remarked, they are by no means im-
[554] prisoned, with the exception perhaps of the women of the highest ranks, they are merely kept and brought up, so that
[834] they may shut themselves off by their veils both in the home and outside from all strange men; among themselves they enjoy the freest intercourse. Such a harem existed already
[191] among the ancient Greeks under the less hostilely regarded name of *gynaikeion*, and even yet the Greek women are not completely emancipated, and are very strictly looked after. Besides, the native Christian women, at least in Upper Egypt, are even more than those of the Moslim "prohibited." Among the ancient Egyptians, however, they were very free, and went unveiled. In consequence of being thus shut up
[184] the oriental women have almost come to form a separate caste, whose laws the men have to respect. This caste has its
[554] female sheikhs, for which dignity the midwives and bathing women in particular are selected, has its medical art, its songs and music, its fashions, almost its own language indeed,
[195] at least so far as expressions are concerned, and unlimited rule over the little children belonging to it. From the round of its meetings even the master of the house is inexorably excluded. Of course, according to the law, the woman is the
[834] servant of the man; she has not the right to sit at a common
[264] table with her husband; on the street he shyly avoids his
[783] veiled spouse; she is even treated by religion as an object of pollution, contact with which demands a full bath before the believer can again perform his devotions; and when men-

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595 [831] is never felt by the Oriental; he condemns it, and knows only the natural sensual love, and the noblest and most practical, the love of a husband, often very true and deep. Among the ancient Egyptians monogamy alone seems to have been practised; on the other hand marriages between brothers and sisters were allowed.

593 To the modern Egyptians, the monogamous Copts, as well as the polygamous Mohammedans, kind-hearted and full of feeling as they are, lively family affections are not to be denied. The members of a family usually cling tenderly to each other; to them a foreign country is equivalent to misery, and a lengthy separation a misfortune. Veneration is deeply, to us as it often seems almost tyrannically, impressed upon children. In the presence of a father it would be disrespectful to smoke, to sit, and to speak more than is necessary. If [594] there are guests the son does not eat with them but serves, [264] it is only by the special desire of a guest that he joins the party. The younger brother has to behave in a similar manner towards his elder. Where circumstances permit, and 596 especially therefore in the country, all the members of the 588 family up to old age inhabit a common dwelling, living in patriarchal style. The old father or mother, no longer able to work, lives with the vigorous son, and free from care awaits the end; and additional children, instead of being [842] looked on as a burden, are welcomed by parents as a blessing from Heaven, which thus bestows on them so many additional 165 supporters. Living the simple and temperate life they do, great ages are common; according to the statements of the people 90 to 100 years are no rarity, but these reports are not to be depended on, since scarcely anybody knows the day or even the year of his birth. Early marriages being the rule, [587] generations follow each other so rapidly that it is not rare for the great-great-grandfather to see his great-great-grandson.

593 The idyllic patriarchal life of union is on the whole the rule, but there are also many exceptions. Here as elsewhere there are cruel mothers, shrews, ungrateful children, brothers at deadly enmity, scolding mothers-in-law, husbands that beat their wives, wives that beat their husbands.

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785 796 allow an eye-lotion to be dropped upon his sore eyes, and the doctor may as well desist at once from attempting a regular treatment during this month. Anointing the head, bathing, 783 cleaning out the ears, and even looking into a mirror, are 785 also considered sinful by some. It need scarcely be men- 796 tioned that matrimonial duties, were it even a kiss, are excluded from the labours of the day. Perjury, stealing, and lying are trifles compared with the deadly sin of cooling the parched tongue with a single drop of water during a day in Ramadan. Ramadan is the touch-stone of the true Moslim, and there are very few who openly at least venture to break the fast. Even the women, who know nothing more of their [562] religion than the words Mohammed, paradise, hell-fire, and [841] unbelievers, fast likewise (though not in all places); if their menses intervene, however, they become unclean, and fasting then becomes sinful. A person who is sick and travelling does not require to fast, and can make up for lost time on another occasion.

785 796 The nearer evening approaches the more does the traffic on the street increase. It is comical to see the eagerness with which the faster awaits the minute that allows him again the wished-for refreshment. One man, for instance, may be seen standing with a live coal held above the newly-filled bowl of his pipe, another holds a piece of date-bread or a cup of coffee an inch from his mouth. The cannon roars, and the [307] dainty is at once bolted. As the thunder of the cannon clears off the clouds from the face of the sky, so does it cheer up the gloomy lenten-visages of the sons of Islam. The streets 796 again become empty, since at home there is already an abun- 264 dant repast prepared; of fat mutton, and many other varieties of dishes, of spices, and sweets of all kinds, there is abundance at the tables of the rich; while the man of the lower classes, who can seldom afford to buy meat at other seasons of the year, has been saving up for months in order to give himself the gratification of a good evening "breakfast" during Ramadan. It is a good custom among the rich to have a [574] guest at this meal, and one is often taken in off the street. [735] Nor does the poor beggar at this time go empty away.

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796 574 order to add life to an entertainment gentlemen often send for singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the last of whom are generally in great request on the evenings of this month. The religious element is represented by a schoolmaster who recites the Koran in another room, and who is expressly hired for the month, or an educated slave or a son may perform this office. Other feasts, such as circumcisions or marriages, are never celebrated in the sacred month. Sittings of the courts are commonly held and the more important official business performed at night. It is not till towards midnight that quietness prevails; the muezzin calls, and soon after, a cry is heard and a warning shot sounds over the town intimating that it is time to prepare for the last meal. If any person has failed to notice this he is warned by individuals who about this time wander singly through the town from house to house beating a drum. The "vigil-meal" consists of the remains of the principal meal warmed up, or of meat fried with butter and articles made of flour, such as are at other times prepared for breakfast. Two hours after the boom of the cannon is again heard, the fast has to begin and along with it the same routine. Such is the sacred month of Ramadan, the great month of fasting and also of feasting, for which the women during the following month sing songs of regret as if for a loved one departed.

796 [852] [585] [692] 264 796 [202] 796 785 [533]

THE GREAT AND THE LITTLE FEAST.

796 In the three following days of the next month, Shaual, the "Little Feast," the "Little Bairam" of the Turks, is celebrated. It begins, as every day does, in the evening. The women have made ready bread and butter and sugar-cakes, the men dress themselves in their best, and the barbers are occupied till late at night in attending to their customers. On this evening three cannon shots proclaim that the fast has now come to an end. After supper everybody goes early to bed, but before sunrise all the men are in the mosque offering up their feast-day prayers, and listening to the feast-day sermon, which does not last much longer

[262] [202] [785]

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than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast[1] the first for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green, and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes, their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty, equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a happy new year, though the new year will not come for three months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving another in any capacity on this day receives from his master a money present or at least a new garment. The women also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, however, as the second day of the feast some persons who are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell;

[1] [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—Analyst]

796 [264] [292] [858] [568] 574 796 [701] [272] [273] [431] 796 [202] [443] [769]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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c) After the Noonday Recess.

31.

539x
461

The noonday recess is ended and work begins again. The messenger, bringing the scanty, midday meal from the village to the working-place, is about to return home. The meal consists generally, of flat bread-cakes and radishes. [264] [262]

Kalna we-'umna, 'o'bā-l-'afa-lla!
rauwaḥ, ya mirsāl, 'dwaḍak 'al-Alla!

We have eaten and risen. If only it were time to leave off work!
Go, messenger, Allah reward thee!

1. 'afa-lla, literally: "Allah forgive!" is a frequent expression for stopping work.

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d) Before the Hour for Leaving off Work.

32.

The hour for stopping work is pictured here very prettily as a person speaking. During the dictation of this little song, Maḥmûd pointed with his hand into the distance.

Da 'afa-lla gāiye min ṛādi
wi-t'ūl: el-'afu, ya-syādi.

See, the hour for ceasing work draws near
And says: "I beg your pardon, gentlemen!"

2. Supply: it is time to close.

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78.

A Ready Answer.

×539 312 462 521 In the morning the women and girls come to the river-bank, to draw water with their Balāliṣ (singular ballāṣ), the well-known, and characteristic water-jars. This is always accompanied by much jesting and talking.

Here a young man teases the girls (ll. 1—2) and they give him a ready answer (ll. 3—4).

Ya banāt, yalli betimlu,
kira-l-mōrade kam?
ʿAšara min abu ṭaʾa
we-bōse min taḥt el-ḫuzām.

"You girls who are drawing water,
How much is the rent of the watering-place?"
"Ten of 'those with the window'
And a kiss under the nose-ring."

[117] [436] 3. The peasants call the escutcheon on the back of European coins, a "window". Thus the people distinguish the English sovereigns: "abu-š-šibbāk" = "father of the window" and "abu-l-ḫuṣān" = "father of the horse". The latter are, besides, more popular among the peasants. In our song of course no small coin is meant.

[301] [264] 4. The nose-ring is usually put through the right side of the nose, and its pendants hang down over the mouth, so that in order to put anything into the mouth, they must be held aside.